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Book Review: Centrist Rhetoric: The Production of Political Transcendence in the Clinton Presidency, by Antonio de Velasco

Michael A. Genovese

Loyola Marymount University, mgenovese@lmu.edu

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Velasco, Antonio de. **Centrist rhetoric: the production of political transcendence in the Clinton presidency.**
Lexington Books, 2010. 191p ISBN 9780739139806, \$60.00.

President Bill Clinton was rhetorically wedded to a centrist political message and returned to it repeatedly. Though at times he governed from a liberal position, his rhetoric was consistently centrist. A key figure in the Democratic Leadership Council, Clinton helped make the Democratic Party more electable in the aftermath of the Reagan Revolution. He touted a "third way" between the extremism of the Right and Left--referred to as "triangulation." Clinton's strategically sophisticated rhetoric was designed to win voters suspicious of political extremes. Communications professor Velasco (rhetoric, Univ. of Memphis) examines Clinton's rhetorical strategy, arguing two points: "Clinton used the center as a complex, mostly tacit figure of argument to advance his political goals, define his adversaries, and overcome key political challenges..." and "as centrist rhetoric helped Clinton to achieve strategic advantage, it also yielded ambiguous and dense scenes for democratic polity that weaved together forms of identification and division in subtle and important ways." This book is a valuable addition to the field of communications studies. Though intended for a specialized audience, it adds to the general understanding of the importance of rhetoric in governing.

--M. A. Genovese, *Loyola Marymount University*

Summing Up: Highly recommended. All undergraduate, graduate, and research collections.